

DANGEROUS SITUATION IN OUR COUNTRY

AND

RESPONSIBILITY OF PATRIOTS



Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

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Payame Insaniyat Forum

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Preface

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi aka Ali Miyan (1914-1999) was an illustrious member of that family of Raibareli which is credited of producing intellectuals and men of letters since generations. It will be no exaggeration to say that in the later half of the twentieth century he was considered a beacon to not only of his co-religionists but people of right thinking and moderate views. Apart from a huge stock of his religious and literary work comprising of more than 80 books which he has left behind he will always be remembered for his efforts in fostering the love and amity between different sections of the society. He boldly stood for the cause of secularism and democracy in India and worked tirelessly to free the nation of corrupt and immoral jigsaw and spread his message of humanity. Gravely hurt by communal riots, often erupted in different parts of the country, he launched a forum 'Payame

Insaniyat' Forum.(Message of Humanity) and toured alongwith his friends, comprising of different communities, to places Vulne Rable to communal riots to instill confidence amonst the victims and bring the agressors to right path.

The present volatile situation in the country demands that the message of the late Maulana be reiterated time and again. The way to peaceful coexistence lie in highlighting the message of humanity. What Maulana said about quater of a century ago has become more relevant today in the context of rising aggressive behaviour of the rightist groups of the majority community for which different sections of the mionarity have become a soft target of violence and distruction. His concern about the rising corruption in Various fiels and its remedy too are as fresh as they were in the past.

the presidential address of Maulana Ali Miyan which he delivered on December 29, 1988 at the conference of 'Payame Insaniyat' at Hydrabad is being reproduced in this booklet. Even after about 20 years it

seems it has been delivered in the context of some recent communal eruptions in different parts of the country and rampant corruption prevailing all around.

S.Abdullah Hasani Nadwi



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A Clarion Call

*Presidential Address by S. Abul Hasan Ali
Nadwi at Message of Humanity
Conference at Hyderabad on 29th
December, 1988*

I would like to tell you, without any preliminaries or philosophical and learned explanations, that every man has two homes. One is his own house in which he lives with his family and children. It is essential that there should be peace and security and affection and an atmosphere of harmony and fraternity in every house. There is another home, a bigger one, and this is his country. But we very often forget that both these are our own homes- the smaller one in which we live with our family and the bigger one composed of innumerable small houses in which reside our kins and countrymen. Just

as we are a member of our small family, we also belong to the larger family- the society and the country. We also lose sight of the fact that both these homes are fated to go together. Or, the fact is that the future of the bigger home does not hinge on our smaller house to the same extent as its fate rests on the bigger one. If this bigger house has peace and harmony, if its members have love and regard for one another, everyone is aware of his duties and obligations to the other, has a respect for the life and property of the other and is willing to defend it, then that house or country is fortunate. It is then a home worth living and dying for, and safe from every danger. But if we do not recognise this bigger home-the country- as our own house, or remain indifferent to it, or make no effort to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony and mutual trust in it, or else we fail to adore it as our own house, then our own smaller house will neither be safe nor have any future.

But his is an apparent and indisputable fact that this bigger home often slips from our

memory. Our own personal house which is no more than a doll's cabin in comparison to the country, becomes the sole object of our care and attention. We begin to consider it as our world, confine our aims and attention and activities to its precincts and consider our destiny linked to those living in it. We close our eyes to the bigger home and forget that our house will not be safe if a tempest is raging outside or there is a devastating fire or flood engulfing the locality. In such conditions no house will be safe. The principles of engineering and architecture and the strongest iron gates will not be able to protect this house against such calamities.

Now, in a like manner let us suppose that the inmates of this house are living with complete harmony and love, peace and tranquility reigns over it and every member of the family is willing to lay down his life for the other, but animosity and enmity surrounds it and hatred and hostility is in the air outside. This house will not be safe in such

conditions. Wherever there is an epidemic, edibles are adulterated and air is polluted, no house howsoever clean or even a hospital or a sanatorium can be deemed to be out of danger.

I will give you an example. Supposing it is an unusually hot summer and you are standing on a sun drenched rock. You pour a bucket of water beneath your feet which makes the rock somewhat cool but after a few minutes you would find that your labour was in vain; the rock has again become hot. If the weather is extremely hot and the entire surface is burning, it would be of no use to cool only the place where you are standing. In the scorching summer, even a slab of ice on which you are standing will quickly melt away and you will again feel the effect of heat. This is what is happening today. Our intellectuals and thinkers and writers and even those who claim to be geniuses are trying to air-condition limited spaces unmindful of their surroundings and the general

atmosphere. Even if you decide to air-condition a house, or a locality, and also decide that you will not step out of it, it will prove a temporary expedient. The burning heat of the atmosphere will render it useless before long. You have to seek a remedy in the law of nature in the atmospheric change which can alone provide a durable relief to you. The divine scriptures also contain the same teaching. The holy Quran says:

And guard yourselves against a chastisement which cannot fall exclusively on those of you who are wrong-doers, and know that Allah is severe in chastisement. (Q. VIII:25)

Immorality in any society, disregard for ethical norms and values, self-gratification, excessive greed, violence and oppression do not have a corrupting influence only on those who commit these evil deeds but work upon the entire society and vitiate the whole atmosphere if no effort is made to check them. The society which closes its eyes to these iniquities falls a prey to

them.

History tells us that there had been many powerful empires and flourishing civilizations which were once at the pinnacle of their glory but in due course of time they yielded to mental confusion, moral degradation, dissoluteness and self-indulgence. Cupidity become their ruling passion, human dignity was rendered meaningless, personal aggrandizement became the chief object of human effort and intelligence and moral values and religious teachings became inapposite, ridiculous. The houses of the rich turned into dens of dissoluteness, presenting the picture of the adage: 'Rome burnt while Nero fiddled.' Those nations had thinkers, philosophers, litterateurs and poets but they were all busy in their own pursuits displaying their skill and proficiency, while the society, different classes and families, in short, every facet of social life was showing signs of decay and was falling apart. When decay once cropped

up into the Roman society, its vast possessions, firm administration and the exquisite Roman Law could not protect it against the eternal law governing the rise and fall of nations which has thus been enunciated by the Quran:

And how many a city have we destroyed that exulted in their living, and yonder are their dwellings which have not been inhabited after them save for a little, while; and verily We have been the inheritors. (Q. XVIII:58)

The gradual degeneration and the final decay of Roman civilization can be seen in Gibbon's classical work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

In India we are persistently ignoring the fact that today we are all concerned with our own hearths and homes. Everyone has become so egocentric that all the ethical values, humanitarian considerations and interests of the nation and country have been relegated to a secondary place. Everybody seems to be selfish and self-absorbed, after

his own petty ends. Everybody is concerned only with what he earns in a day or a month and what more can he get through unfair means. Excuse me if I say that the income through unfair means has these days become a qualification, a criterion for determining the status of any man, specially on the occasion of settling marriages. People unashamedly ask how much the prospective bride-groom earns besides his salary. Those who depend merely on their lawfully earned income are exceptions these days.

Friends,

It is not sufficient enough to take care of only one's own house or to renovate and beautify it as an ideal residence. This is because islands do exist in the sea-there are thousands of them- but there can be no isolated spaces in the mainlands. Nature permits existence of isles in the seas but not in mid-continents. But we have turned every house into an island. Every city and every caste and sub-caste has isolated itself like an

island but they are not destined to last for long. We know that the oceanic lands and mountains have existed in isolation for thousands of years and they will remain so in future also, but the Law of God is different for wide open spaces of land. These cannot remain detached and isolated from others. It is but natural that one part of it should be influenced by the other. God commands this, the religions teach us and law of nature demands that all the men living on this earth should co-operate and assist one another. Humanity is like a chain whose every link is connected with the other, the fate of one is affiliated to another; every one of us is both a giver and a recipient and all are dependant on each other. Ancient eastern philosophy defined man as a being inherently social. The law of jungle whereby one animal has nothing to do with the other cannot prevail here, nor can we exist if every man with greater prowess were allowed to prey on the weaker one like wild beasts. We have of

necessity to consult and seek assistance of others in our affairs. Every country, every city and every locality should be like a family where its every member has a sentiment of love and respect for his kin and is willing to share his joy and distress with others. It should be a society where the diversity of colour and creed should be viewed with the same delight as the variety of flowers in the garden or the multiplicity of natural phenomenon. Our instincts of love and affection should be awakened by the children of our neighbours and countrymen. I had once asked in one of my press conferences what they would think about a country where people were not delighted to see their own children? Instead of finding any pleasure in them, anxiety overtook them about the future of those children, about the riots and disturbances which might send them to sleep for ever.

Surely, this appears to be somewhat abnormal and aberrant situation. A man not

belonging to this country is most like to reject it as unbelievable. But, it does happen here. Why? It is because we have no sense of human dignity, no respect for life of man and no conviction that entire humanity is like a family. We never realize that whatever exists in the country constitutes its wealth which, in one way or the other, can be of benefit to each one of us. This country has the honour of giving birth to those great men who had preached the message of love to the whole world. Love is an essential ingredient in the texture of this country. You must have read its history. It does not end with the Ramayana and Mahabharat but also contains innumerable stories of mutual love and affection, of brotherhood and selfsacrifice for others. I will recount here two incidents pertaining to the life of some sufi saints. I am a student of history and want to share my knowledge with you.

Khwaja Farid Uddin Ganjshakar was a sufi saint of the 12th century (6th century

A.H.). Someone brought him a pair of scissors as a present. The place he had come from was famous for the quality of its scissors. He had thought that the saint would appreciate his present and would bless him. But when he presented the pair, the Khwaja said, "What! I have no use of it. My business is not to sever and pull apart but to sew and fasten (the hearts of the people). I do not need this pair of scissors. You should have rather brought me a needle."

One of his renowned successors was Khwaja Nizamuddin (also known to the people of Delhi as Sultanji). Once he said, "The custom generally followed is to be genial with the gentle and tough with the rough but our elders used to be genial with both the gentle and the rough". Then he added, "If anyone sows one thorn in my way and I also put another thorn in retaliation, the entire path would soon be full of thorns. Therefore, put a flower in return for a thorn and you will find the path full of flowers".

This was really the message of this country. Those who came from outside also accepted and preached it until it became the distinguishing mark of this land and added to its fame and honour.

Now, the need of the hour (and also the gist of this Forum of Message of Humanity) is that we should take care of our bigger house. We should not rest content that since we have ease and comfort and our own behaviour and morals are unblemished, we need not bother for others. The Prophet of humanism has explained it through a pithy and trenchant parable which is unique in its diction and style. I have been a student of literature and have studied history and philosophy besides being a keen observer of different reformatory movements, but I have not found anything so concise and to the point. The Prophet said, "Life (of man) is like a boat with two decks, one upper and the other lower". I consider it a miracle of the Prophet since Arabia has neither rivers nor canals.

The country had then no harbours like Jiddah of today where ships from foreign countries, could have laid anchor. Anyway, those were the times when simple boats having a single floor were in use all over the world and the Prophet had never gone on a voyage. Then how he was able to give the example of upper and lower classes which, in itself, is very meaningful. We all know that those belonging to the upper class are more sophisticated, have a higher standard of living and are more sensitive. The lower deck is meant for the poor and middle classes. However, continuing the allegory the Prophet said, "The water is stored in the upper deck from where all the passengers have to obtain it. The people travelling in the lower deck also need water for which they have to go to the upper deck. Water is always likely to spill especially when one has to carry it in small jars in a moving thing like a boat. This causes inconvenience and annoyance to the upper class passengers. Finally, they

decide that they would not allow the lower class passengers to fetch water from their deck.

“The people in the lower deck cannot do without water. Therefore, they decide to make a hole in the boat so that they may get water directly from the river. Now, if the persons in the upper deck are not senseless and not bent upon inviting their doom, they would beseech the people in the lower deck to continue fetching water from their floor, they would beg forgiveness for their mistake, for a hole in the lower part of the boat would spell disaster for all.”

The Prophet meant that all human beings living in any country and constituting any nation or society (irrespective of their differences of colour and race and economic status) are like fellow travellers in a boat. In our own language there is one adage “travellers of a single boat” signifying that if any untoward thing happens to the boat, all would suffer equally.

Friends,

I find it something enigmatic that this vast country is today bereft of even a few hundred persons who are anxious about the well-being of the country, who can visualise that if any calamity overtakes the country they would not remain untouched by it. We do not have any dearth of writers, thinkers, erudite scholars and political leaders but tell me honestly how many persons are there who are really anxious, who feel distressed at the thought of moral degeneration which has taken root in our country. Corruption in any society is an evidence of its reaching the lowest depth of perversion. It is now firmly entrenched in our country. Foodstuffs are being adulterated now. If I remember correctly the Central Health Minister said recently that sixty per cent of the medicines are spurious. On the occasion of inaugural ceremony of a public hospital, where the Chief Minister of the State and other high officials were present, i had said that the

instrument for measuring the moral standard of any society is a hospital where one can see whether the poor patients are being treated sympathetically with a spirit of selflessness or bribery and corruption has reached there also. I was told by a friend that in certain hospitals the toilets are locked and are allowed to be used by the patients and their attendants when they pay two rupees to the person having their charge. My another friend who happens to be a government servant told me that he had annually to get a medical check-up made and submit its report to the government. This year he was told after the check-up that he had a spot in his left lung for which he would have to spend rupees two thousand. Now this was not required for medicines and injections but for removal of the so-called spot in the medical report. The palm of the doctor had to be greased and the fitness report was handed over to him. How long the country can put up with such malpractices. Let alone enjoyment of life,

people will find it difficult to live in such conditions.

I admit or rather deem myself bound by my religion to confess that we Muslim have failed to discharge our duties. Our Prophet had taught us: "The Most Merciful is gracious to those who are kind to others. Be kind to those who are on earth and He who is in heaven would be kind to you."

A celebrated poet, Altaf Husain Hali has rendered this teaching of the Prophet in these verses:

To the man God is never soft,
If a wrong does not make his heart
bleed.

To those who live on earth, be kind;
To you God in the heavens will be mild.

If God asked us on the Day of Rackoning why we endured these wrongs, why did we not fight it stoutly, why did we not act in the light of divine commandments, why did we not follow the example set by the Prophet of Islam, his companions and

successors and other godly souls of later ages, we would hardly be able to give any answer. I do not feel ashamed to tell you that Islam has a definite creed and a definite law for regulating the life of every Muslim. We have to abide by these which make it incumbent on us to protect the country against these evils and wrongs. As one of the inmates of the ship, it becomes our duty not to allow it to sink. This is a responsibility lying both on us and you. We are all answerable to God for it.

Friends,

In bringing my speech to a conclusion I must affirm that our country is still not dead, it has taken a nap. While a dead person cannot be made to stand up, one who is sleeping can be awakened. History tells us that countries and communities and civilisations have often fell asleep and risen again. To get to sleep is not disagreeable, it is a symbol of life. But there is a limit for one to sleep on for nobody can be allowed to sleep

indefinitely, particularly at the time when race for life is getting faster every day. Today we have to face a great challenge. The challenge is not simply in the fields of economy, politics and military prowess, it also pertains to moral and sense of honour. It is time that our country asserts its moral norms and designs an ideal society. Our call from this Forum of the Message of Humanity may be looked upon by some as a cry in wilderness, but if no one pays any heed to our call, we will at least be absolved from our responsibility before our God. However, history tells us that the calls given by a single man are very often heard; the world could not afford to remain indifferent to solitary calls in the past when they were given at an appropriate time. History records several incidents when such calls were heard and acted upon. It is with this hope that we have given this call earlier at several places and now we have come here to invite you to our cause.